

July 2006

DRAFT: Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management – Peninsula College

Introduction

Peninsula College is seeking Higher Education Coordinating Board approval to offer a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management. Peninsula College is one of four colleges selected by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges through a competitive process to develop a baccalaureate degree pathway for students who have completed a technical associate degree.

The Applied Management program is being proposed in response to employer difficulty in attracting appropriately prepared workers and area residents' difficulty in accessing baccalaureate degree programs. With implementation of the BAS program, graduates of a broad range of associate-level programs would have access to a baccalaureate degree program with a management focus. The proposed program would begin in fall 2007 and would enroll 20 FTE students in the first year of instruction, growing to 40 FTE students at full enrollment in the third year.

Relationship to Institutional Role and Mission and the Strategic Master Plan

The primary mission of Peninsula College is to provide “educational opportunities in the areas of academic transfer, professional and technical skills, basic skills and continuing education. The College also contributes to the cultural and economic enrichment of Clallam and Jefferson Counties.” Consistent with this mission, the BAS program would build on existing professional and technical associate degree programs that would prepare students to advance professionally and meet the needs of local employers.

Many elements of this program align well with the mission of Peninsula College. However, the college's new authority to grant bachelor's degrees, even when limited to a single program, represents a significant expansion of the institution's role and mission. Developing a degree program at a new level has implications for accreditation and potential impacts on students, faculty, and institutional resources. These implications and impacts are discussed later in this summary.

Program goals are consistent with those of the *2004 Statewide Strategic Master Plan*, in that they provide opportunities for students to earn degrees and respond to the state's economic needs. The proposed degree program would respond to local employer needs for a more highly educated workforce. In addition, the new program would significantly improve local access to a baccalaureate education.

Program Need

The proposal responds to needs expressed by students, employers, and community stakeholders. The *State and Regional Needs Assessment (HECB)* does not identify a statewide gap in the supply of graduates prepared for management occupations; however, the assessment does find significant need for additional training in a number of fields. In most cases, the demand is driven by the need for front-line supervisors and managers. Analysis of the regional data shows that front-line supervisory and managerial positions are among the most prevalent openings in the mid-level training and long-training categories for the Olympic region.

The proposal uses data from the Washington State Employment Security Department and other sources to demonstrate employer demand for the program. Key findings of the analysis are that the region's economy is growing, unemployment is down, job openings are going unfilled (job vacancy rates and duration are up), and employers are expressing difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified workers. Current projections indicate more than 750 annual openings for management administrative positions and front-line supervisor/manager positions through 2012.

Local employers have expressed difficulty in hiring for supervisory and managerial positions because it is often difficult to attract qualified workers from outside the region. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that the majority of companies in the region (72 percent) employ fewer than 10 workers, and therefore rarely have the resources to recruit from outside the community. Consistent with the findings of the board's *State and Regional Needs Assessment*, these employers also express a need for workers who possess both technical skills that are specific to the industry and broader problem-solving, reasoning, and communication skills that are developed in baccalaureate-level programs.

Student demand for the program was assessed primarily through student and alumni surveys. A Fall 2005 survey conducted by Peninsula College, found that 65 percent of Associate of Applied Science – Transfer (AAS-T) students indicated an interest in the program. Among graduates, 77 percent indicated similar interest. Employers also indicated support for the program, and said that their workers and organizations stood to benefit -- and they would encourage workers to participate in the degree program.

Community demand for the program was assessed primarily through employer surveys and letters of support. Respondents said it is difficult and unreasonably time consuming to commute from the Port Angeles area to other program offerings in the greater Puget Sound region, and that the proposed degree program would provide baccalaureate-level access to students in the region. In addition, the program is supported by area tribes, who see this as an opportunity for their members to access a baccalaureate education.

As indicated, there are few educational options at the baccalaureate level or higher for residents in the region, and this program would not duplicate existing or planned program offerings.

Program Description

The Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management would provide a baccalaureate opportunity for graduates from a diverse range of associate-level programs. Students who meet prerequisite coursework requirements and have completed an Associate of Applied Science – Transfer (AAS-T), Associate of Applied Science (AAS), Associate of Arts (AA), or Associate of Science (AS), would be eligible for admission to the BAS program. AA and AS graduates would also be required to complete two years of work experience. The program would be developed based upon successful models of applied management programs implemented in other states. Graduates would possess a mix of industry-specific technical skills and a more general set of management and decision-making skills developed in the applied management program.

Students would be required to earn an appropriate associate degree and meet specific program prerequisites of 20 credits of general education, including English composition, college-level math, and at least one social science course. In addition, students would need to demonstrate proficiency in Microsoft Excel and Access, possess an overall G.P.A. of 2.0 or higher, and submit an essay and two letters of reference. A selection committee of staff and faculty would determine admission to the program.

Once enrolled in the program, students would be required to complete a total of 90 credits of coursework; to include 30 additional credits of general education coursework, 30 required credits in management theory and practice, and 30 elective credits in management or general education (integrated seminars). Currently, all 90 credits are listed as 300- or 400-level courses; however, the curriculum is still being developed. As they evaluate the required courses - faculty, with the help of established four-year institutions, will identify existing courses currently offered in the curriculum that may substitute for the required courses.

For example, the program proposal lists coursework in statistics, accounting, and economics as requirements at the 300 level. It may be reasonable to list these courses at that level, but it is likely that students who have taken similar courses at the 100- or 200-level would be duplicating much of the content, and would be better served taking an alternate elective. The general education curriculum would include 10 credits in communications, 10 credits in quantitative reasoning, 10 credits in social science, 5-10 credits of natural science, and 5-10 credits in humanities, for a total of 50 general education credits. The proposal indicates that the program also would review and incorporate standards of the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) and Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB); and the assessment plan would incorporate best practices identified by these accrediting organizations.

Graduates would be prepared for positions in a range of management and supervisory occupations in the region. Employers have expressed support for the proposed degree program, stressing the need to provide a local option to “grow their own” supervisors and managers and develop the skills that workers need to advance and adapt to a changing workplace and economy.

The program would draw largely on existing faculty, many of whom are prepared at the doctoral level. Most have significant professional experience as well. In the first year of instruction, the program would accommodate 20 FTE (35 headcount) students. The program would grow to approximately 40 FTE (70 headcount) students by the third year.

Students would be assessed based on clearly-defined learning outcomes that are consistent with the overall program objectives and the needs expressed by area employers. Student assessment would occur through various tools at multiple points in time. These would include, but would not be limited to: performance in individual courses, student self assessments and employer assessments of students, student progress as measured through standardized assessments, and evaluation of student portfolios.

The program would be evaluated based on stated objectives. Assessment would include a review of program statistics, including retention and completion; student employment outcomes; program-wide progress of student learning (as measured by standardized assessments); and surveys of students, graduates, and employers.

Diversity

A number of strategies to recruit and retain a diverse student body are outlined in the program proposal. Peninsula College currently enrolls a student body that is more diverse than the surrounding community. When implementing the new program, the college would build on that success through outreach efforts, student activities programming, and academic programming. Specifically, Peninsula College has identified needs within the five local Native American tribes, and they are working with tribal leaders and faculty to ensure that the curriculum would meet the needs of the community. In addition, the college supports a range of activities that are designed to help students successfully complete their studies. Retention efforts include strategies to engage students in the campus environment, support of academic needs through tutoring and other related resources, and advising and financial aid resources to ensure that students have access to the information and resources that are needed to successfully complete their studies.

External Review

The program was reviewed by two external experts: Dr. Dorothy Brandt, faculty coordinator of the Bachelor of Applied Technology Program at Brazosport College; and Dr. E. Jay Larson, Bachelor of Applied Science program supervisor and management professor at Great Basin College.

Both reviewers expressed support for the program. Dr. O'Neill-Barrett was impressed by the representation of a significant number of doctoral-qualified faculty already on staff. She outlined a number of suggestions that she said would serve to improve the program. First, she suggested that the program utilize an assessment tool such as the ACT Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) to better understand students' aptitude as they enter the program and to tailor advising and course selection to student needs. Program developers responded that they are considering such an assessment, but have not made a final decision on which tool to use for this purpose. Drawing on her own experience with the regional accrediting agency for her school, O'Neill-Barrett also expressed some concern that the institution had not fully considered the resource needs required to offer baccalaureate-level instruction. Specifically, necessary library improvements were not sufficient. Program representatives responded that they are in the process of building a new library facility and are adding substantial resources to the library in support of the program (approximately \$35,000 in additional funding per year is earmarked to support library resources). Finally, she made suggestions to mitigate negative impact on faculty workload by considering demands outside the classroom and to limit course sections to ensure a "healthy" class size. The college is responding with limited course sections to ensure a critical mass of students in classes.

Dr. Larson indicated support for the applied management program as an appropriate degree program in a rural area; one that would meet the needs of students and employers in an area where students from diverse fields are brought together to enhance their skills. He was especially supportive of the notion of hiring a student services/workforce liaison that could work to attract and retain students and assist with job placement.

Program Costs

The program would enroll 20 FTE students in the first year of instruction, growing to 40 FTE students by the fourth year of the program. The program would draw on existing faculty for much of the instruction; however, at least one full-time faculty member would be hired to support the program. The program estimates the faculty-time equivalent to 1.0 full-time faculty during the planning year, growing to 2.8 FTE faculty in the third year of instruction. Administrative and clerical costs are based on .75 FTE in the planning year and 1.0 FTE in the third year of instruction.

The program proposal outlines a significant investment in the college's library facilities and collection. A new 25,000-square-foot library is currently under construction. To support the addition of the BAS program, the college also would add \$33,000 to the library budget in the planning year to build and maintain the collection. Ongoing investment in the library would total \$11,000 in the first year of instruction and \$35,000 annually thereafter.

The institution has also reviewed a range of available student support services, and staff in financial aid, advising, and placement services have begun planning for baccalaureate students to ensure that appropriate services are available to support the new program.

Prior to the first year of instruction, the college would receive planning funds allocated in the 2006 supplemental budget. Start-up costs that would typically be reflected in the first year budget are largely absorbed in the planning year. As a result, the cost per FTE in the first year of instruction with an entering class of 20 FTE and the cost at full enrollment in the third year (40 FTE), are constant at \$10,400 per FTE. The average cost of instruction for upper division coursework in business at the regional baccalaureate institutions is roughly \$7,950 – 8,250 per FTE (including indirect costs).

Staff Analysis

The proposed program would support the unique role and mission of the institution by providing a degree pathway for area students that would support their career and educational goals and also would support the needs of the local community for an appropriately prepared workforce.

The program proposal also advances the goals of the strategic master plan by providing opportunities for students to earn degrees and responding to the state's economic needs. The program would provide access to baccalaureate level instruction for students who would otherwise not be able to obtain that level of training. In addition to the benefit to students and their families, implementation of the degree program would benefit the local community by helping prepare a workforce to support the region's economic development goals.

Consistent with the goals of HB 1794, the program would provide a bachelor's degree pathway for students who have completed an applied associate degree.

The proposed program includes an assessment approach with well-defined student-learning outcomes that would be assessed at multiple points in time through a variety of approaches. Assessment would be based on clear goals using objective data on student progress, along with feedback from students, alumni and employers.

The program proposal responds to demonstrated student, employer, and community needs; and it is consistent with the *State and Regional Needs Assessment* and the institution's own assessment of need. The proposal is an appropriate response to the needs of employers and students in a rural community who do not have reasonable access to existing baccalaureate institutions. The unique needs of the community are driven in large part by the challenges that employers face in attracting and retaining prepared workers from outside the community, as well as local residents' limited access to baccalaureate programs.

The proposal identifies strategies to attract and retain a diverse student body -- including outreach efforts, retention support, and a curriculum designed to respond to the unique needs of students and the community.

The proposal has been evaluated by external reviewers who support the program as designed; however, as the program curriculum is more fully fleshed out, it would be important to seek additional input from local baccalaureate institutions. Adding bachelor's degree granting authority to Peninsula College's mission has implications for accreditation and potential impacts

on students, faculty, and institutional resources. Using planning money during the first year of the pilot to expand library resources and student support services would help position the college to best support students, faculty, and staff in the upper division and successfully fulfill their stated mission of providing educational opportunities. In addition, the suggestion that students be assessed as a way of tailoring course selection and advising strategies should be seriously considered. Students from diverse fields and those who have been out of school for an extended period often need additional preparation before entering into junior-level coursework. A number of programs achieve this through transition courses that are designed to provide students with a common foundation before they move into coursework that is specific to their major(s). The program would not duplicate existing programs and the costs appear to be reasonable, given the facility and infrastructure needs required to support new four-year degree program at a community college.

Recommendation

Based on careful review of Peninsula College's Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management program proposal and supplemental sources, HECB staff and the board's education committee recommend that the full board approve it.

RESOLUTION NO. 6-19

WHEREAS, Peninsula College proposes to offer a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management; and

WHEREAS, The proposed program is consistent with the purpose of HB 1794; providing an applied bachelor's degree pathway to students who have completed a technical associate degree program and do not have ready access to other bachelor's degree programs; and

WHEREAS, The program would support the unique role and mission of the institution by providing a degree pathway for area students that would support their career and educational goals; and

WHEREAS, The proposed program is consistent with the *State and Regional Needs Assessment* and supports the local community's need for an appropriately prepared workforce; and

WHEREAS, The proposal identifies strategies to attract and retain a diverse student body, which will respond to the unique needs of students and the community; and

WHEREAS, The college is committed to providing the services and support necessary to expand its institutional role and mission by offering a baccalaureate program; and

WHEREAS, The proposed program has been reviewed by external reviewers who support the program as designed; and

WHEREAS, The costs are reasonable;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Higher Education Coordinating Board approves the Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management.

Adopted:

July 27, 2006

Attest:

Gene Colin, Chair

Bill Grinstein, Vice Chair